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Control: 10263
Rec'd: JANUARY 17, 1958
11:24 PM

FROM: ROME

TO: Secretary of State

NO: 2301, JANUARY 17, 8 PM

HIGH GOI OFFICIAL EXPRESSED TO EMBASSY OFFICER IN STRICT CONFIDENCE HIS CONCERN (SHARED BY SOME OF HIS LIKE-MINDED COLLEAGUES) OVER REPORTED ACTIVITIES OF MATTEI IN SAUDI ARABIA. ACCORDING TO SOURCE, INFO IN GOI POSSESSION, MATTEI (CHAGRINED OVER ENI'S SETBACK IN LYBIA) RENEWED NEGOTIATIONS WITH SAUDI, ALTHOUGH GOI DOES NOT KNOW WITH WHOM MATTEI DEALS OR WHAT HIS SPECIFIC AIMS. SOURCE SAID MATTEI, WHO OVER-EXTENDED HIMSELF AND FACED WITH FINANCIAL DIFFICULTIES, UNLIKELY TO ACCOMPLISH ANYTHING IN TERMS OF EXPLORATION OR EXPLOITATION, BUT SEEKS TO EMBARRASS ARAMCO BY OFFER TO SAUDI SIMILAR TO IRAN DEAL. TO A QUERY ON WHETHER IT WOULD BE USEFUL FOR THE EMBASSY TO RESUME CONTACT WITH MATTEI, SOURCE EXPRESSED VIEW THAT HE DID NOT SEE ANY USEFUL PURPOSE BEING SERVED BY SUCH CONTACT AT THIS TIME.

DEPARTMENT MAY WISH TO PASS THIS INFORMATION TO EMBASSY AT CAIRO.

TILLERBACH

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